

The Daily Astorian.

ASTORIA, OREGON:

FRIDAY, APRIL 4, 1890

City and County Official Paper.

IN BEHRING'S SEA.

The full text of President Harrison's proclamation, as published in THE MORNING ASTORIAN of March 25th, regarding American claims in Behring's sea, recalls the matter and begs the question. The matter of dominion in northwestern Pacific waters should be settled, and nothing is ever settled until it is settled right.

If the sea is incapable of dominion, it matters not that Russia was the first civilized power to hold the shores of Behring sea. Rights incapable of being acquired can not be transferred. If Behring sea had been what it was not, a gulf entirely inclosed by Russian territory, with an entrance which could have been defended from the shores, its status as a closed sea could possibly have been transferred to the United States, although its shores after such transfer would be held by different nations. But, on the north, Behring sea is connected with the Arctic ocean by Behring strait, which is thirty-six miles wide, and through which commerce has been carried on by the United States for half a century. On the south there are the innumerable passes through the Aleutian islands almost equal in width to Behring strait. Between these islands and the Commander group, on the shores of Asia, there is a gap of water where half the navies of the world might ride abreast, and be out of sight of land and of each other.

That the seal fisheries are in danger of destruction by numerous marauders, reckless of the future, is no justification for the revival of the claim of *mare clausum*. That it is the duty of the government to do all in its power to prevent the indiscriminate destruction of the fur seals is admitted; but this should be done by international arrangement. The proposition seems to have met with the general approval of the nations most interested, and it is to be hoped that it will be persisted in until Behring sea is patrolled by a police of the nations.

In order to justify the seizure of the *Black Diamond*, the United States government must advocate rules of international law inconsistent with those urged in connection with the northeastern fishery dispute, and opposed to the position assumed by it in every case which has arisen in the last hundred years. On the east shore it is justly and honestly urging a liberal and enlightened policy in consonance with the spirit of the age. It can not afford to support an illiberal policy of restriction on the northwest shore.

Our difficulties with Canada should be treated as a whole, and in a liberal and enlightened spirit. The commercial and personal relations between the two countries are too intimate, their present and future interests are too closely entwined, to admit of a narrow and intolerant policy. Questions of commercial policy and interest should not be permitted to blind a people to those principles of universal right and justice which are acquiesced in by all civilized nations, simply because they are right. Commercial relations, tariffs, and reciprocity treaties are for statesmen, to be disposed of as the present interests of the whole country dictate. Questions of international law should be for jurists and courts, and selfish interests should not enter into their decision. The failure to appreciate this distinction is one of the causes of these dangerous contentions growing out of the conflicting views of fishery rights. If these questions of law were once solved, negotiations could proceed with some prospect of a reasonably satisfactory issue. But so long as the negotiators start with directly contrary views of the law of the case, there is no chance of an issue which one party will not consider an absolute surrender. It would be an easy matter for the United States and Great Britain to agree upon a case in which the issues of law involved in the northeastern

and northwestern fishery disputes could be stated. It is reasonable to suppose that the nations which could submit to arbitration such burning questions as the Alabama claims and the fishery trouble in 1871 could agree to submit these purely legal questions to an international tribunal, composed of three or five of the great judges of the world; for instance, the chief justice of the United States, the lord chief justice of England, and a third, equally eminent and learned. The decision of such a tribunal, pronounced after a full hearing, would be received with respect and acquiescence. With these questions settled, there would be something tangible, some point of departure for negotiations. It is not to the credit of the two great English-speaking nations of the world, that these irritating disputes have extended over almost the entire history of the United States. Many questions of greater or less importance have been disposed of, but these fishery disputes still remain as fruitful sources of irritation and bitterness.

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The Convention will consist of sixty-one delegates, apportioned among the several precincts as follows: being one delegate at large and one delegate additional for each twenty votes and fraction thereof cast for Hon. John M. Gearin for congressman at the general election in 1888.

John Day's Precinct. Bear Creek. Knappa. Clifton. Westport. Vesper. Fish Hawk. Mishawaka. Young's River. Lewis & Clarke. Seaside. Clatsop. Astoria Precinct.

The primaries in the above named precincts are called for April 12th.

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\$3,000 Good Business Lot on Street Car line, 50x125.	\$400 Will buy 80 Acres of Tide Land; good location.
\$2,000 Will buy a Book in Williamsport.	\$475 Will buy good Corner Lot in Olney's Astoria, 50x100.
\$2,000 Business Lot, One-Half Block from Street Car, 50x150.	\$225 to \$250 will buy Lots in Block No. 76, Shively's Astoria.
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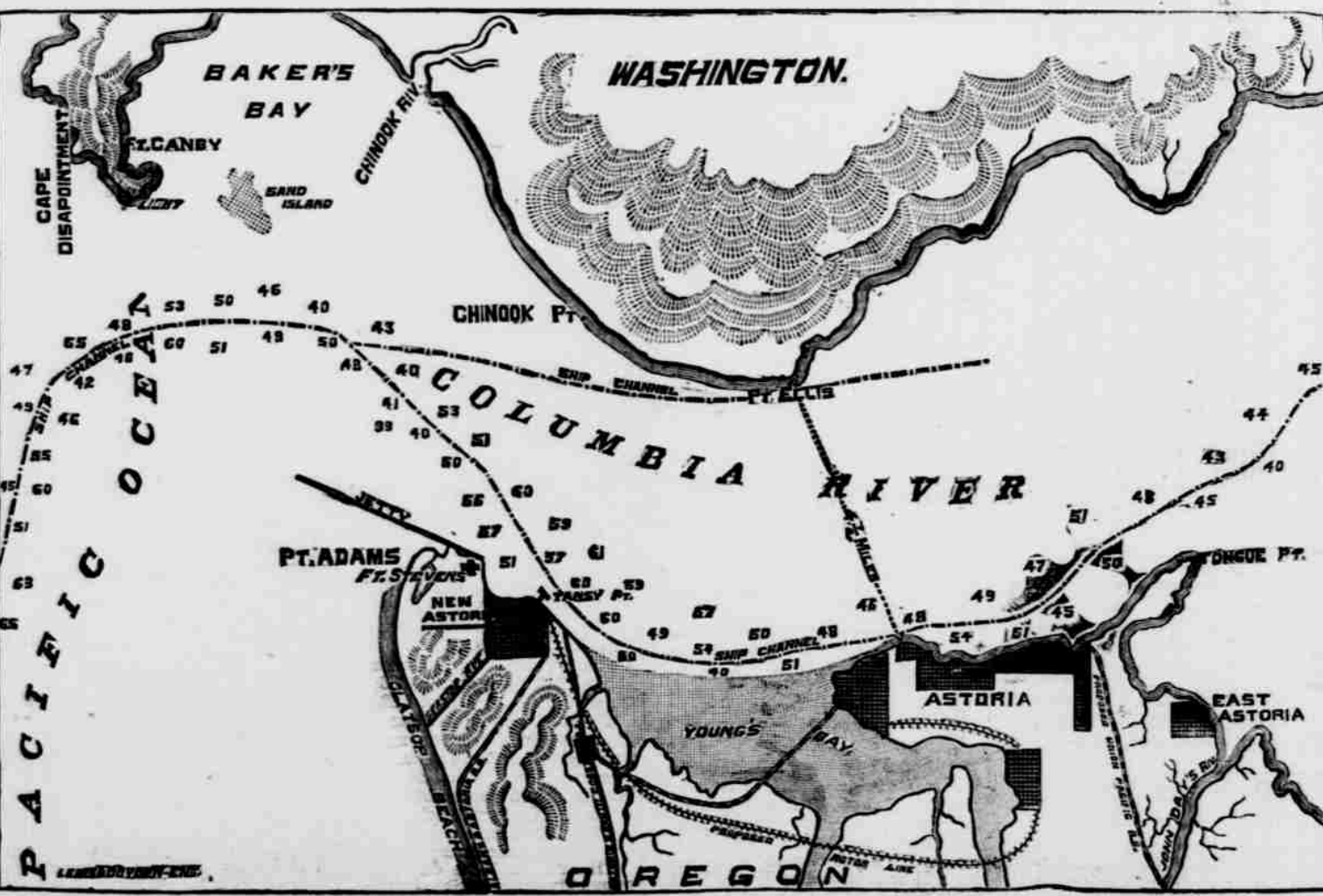
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